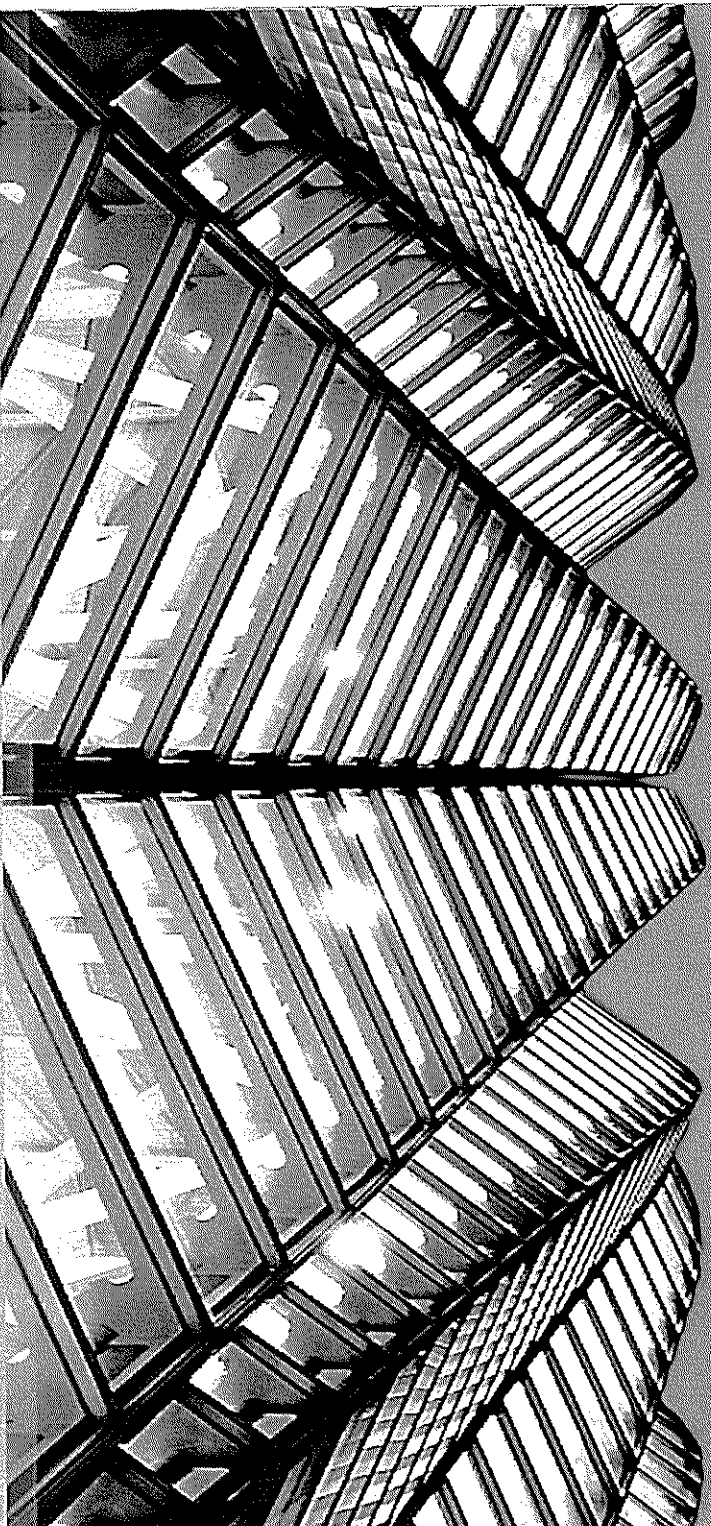


INTED 2011

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WELCOME INTRODUCTION

Dear INTED2011 participants,

INTED, being in its 5th edition, is a key annual networking event for the sector of technology, education and development, attracting and bringing together experts in education from around the world.

INTED2011 has once again emerged as a large international platform for exchanging ideas and experiences. Experts and academics presenting at this conference will share with you their most up-to-date and practical information on education and learning innovations.

In 54 parallel sessions, delegates will discuss the latest trends and developments in education and ICT supported learning. More than 410 oral presentations, 125 posters and 600 attendants from 65 countries will contribute to this intensive program.

This is an excellent opportunity to acquire skills and inspire yourself by learning from experiences and innovative approaches in education. We invite you to participate in INTED2011 and take the best of its presentations and specific sessions, discussions and debates, as well as the posters exhibition throughout the two-day conference.

In addition, we also wish you enjoy your stay in Valencia. Having a heritage of over two thousand years of history, Valencia offers a wide range of monuments and cultural places to visit, being as well a very modern city. Its culture, cuisine and art tradition along with its location on the Mediterranean coast and its pleasant climate make this city an ideal setting to enjoy during your stay.

We thank all of our participants for attending this event and making it a unique place to learn and discuss about Education and Technology.

INTED2011 Organising Committee

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM, JOB-SEARCH INTENSITY AND CAREER DECISION-MAKING AMONG FINAL YEAR STUDENTS: AN APPLICATION OF STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the relationship among self-esteem, job-search intensity and career decision-making of final year students. The probabilities are used to test whether there are any influences exist in three aspects namely, self-esteem over career decision-making self-efficacy, job-search intensity over career decision-making self-efficacy, and self-esteem over job-search intensity. The instruments used were a demographic information sheet, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Job Search Intensity Scale, and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form. Participants were recruited using a cluster sampling procedure. Data were collected from a self-reported questionnaire administered to 678 final year students of a public university in Malaysia. The statistical tests used to analyze the data were Structural Equation Modeling using AMOS 16. Findings showed that there were significant relationships between self-esteem and career decision-making self-efficacy, and a significant relationship between job-search intensity and career decision-making self-efficacy. The implications for students' developments and career development centre are also discussed.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Job-search intensity, Career decision-making self-efficacy, students, Structural Equation Modeling.

1 INTRODUCTION

Malaysian graduates normally were qualified in their area of studies, but they lacked self-confidence and lack skills of prepare for job search [1]. Other study found that, fresh graduates have good academic qualifications but their main drawbacks are their lack of positive attitude, confidence, and prepare for job search [2]. These drawbacks are closely related to self-esteem, career decision-making, and job search behaviour as the variables involved in the present study. In this study, the first variable focus was self-esteem, followed by job search intensity, and lastly, career decision-making.

Self-esteem is defined variously by different scholars. Self-esteem is an overall evaluation of oneself in either a positive or negative way and believes himself or herself to be competent and worthy of living [3]. Self-esteem is also viewed as a global judgment of the worth or value of the self [4]. Self-esteem may impact on the transition to working life and work-related attitudes during young adulthood. Young adults with high self-esteem are active in dealing with career related issues, such as completing their education successfully, managing their budgetary resources, and finding an appropriate job, which then contributes to their success in the transition to work and the early career persistence in the face of obstacles [6], may lead to work-related engagement, e.g. feelings of vigor, [5]. Individual with high self-esteem increases career-related self-efficacy beliefs which then lead to dedication and absorption in one's working life later on [7], and high quality of performance in the career domain [8]. Individual with low self-esteem tend to be more emotionally and performed negative attitudes towards their work. They may also interact inadequately with other people in their work. These characteristics may in particular increase their susceptibility to burnout and to feelings of reduce accomplishments [7].

Self-esteem is one of the most widely examined personality variables in job-search research [9]. Research shows that individuals with high self-esteem will take more risks in job selection, choose unconventional jobs [10], and choose challenging careers and jobs [11]. Meanwhile, individuals with

low self-esteem tend to be less successful in their job searches [11]. In relation to these two factors, students should have high self-esteem through out the academic session, and they also have to start searching for jobs in the final stage of their academic studies. A recent study related with these two factors found that, students divide their effort between studying and job-search shortly before graduation. Study effort generates higher grades, while search effort increases the probability that an individual starts working immediately after graduation [12].

Job-search is a process that gathers information about potential job opportunities, generates and evaluates job alternatives, and chooses the most potential and appropriate from the alternatives [9]. One of the earlier studies examined job search intensity as a function to determine self-esteem and financial need, which in turn predicted employment [13]. Job-search intensity is also refers to the degree of job search effort by future job seekers. It entails behaviours that are likely to lead to job interviews and job offers [14]. Currently, job-search intensity been defined as the frequency with which job seekers engage in job search activities such as preparing a resume [15]. Overall, the concept of job-search intensity has been utilized in several studies as a measure of the frequency of job seeking behaviours [16, 17, 18, 19 & 20]

When an individual search for viable career alternatives, they make comparison, and then decide one, it will involved the process of career decision-making [21]. Career decision-making include choices made by individuals about occupations, education, training, and employment. The sequence and number of these decisions will vary among individuals depending on their situations [16]. Career decision-making is one of important career developmental tasks [22, 23, 24]. Most career development theories are based on the notion that individuals will explore their environment, have insight into their own behaviours, values and affect, and use this information and insights to make decisions about choosing work and career [25,26]. One of the domains that need to develop by school leavers is decision-making [27]. Accordingly, decision-making is also one of the three aspects of students' self-development that need to be considered in order to achieve Vision 2020 in Malaysia [28]. Decision-making increases if someone has sufficient information about possible career alternatives and is able to project the possible outcomes of different career choices [29]. Furthermore, research showed that decision-making mediated the relationship between goal-orientation and career concerns [30].

Several studies had investigated certain variables related to self-esteem [5, 6, 7, 8 & 9]. Job-search intensity [30, 31, 32 & 33], and career decision-making [34, 35, 36, 37, 38 & 39]. However, there has been little discussion about the relationship on these three variables. As mentioned by Saks [9], not every relationship in his model has received the same amount of attention in previous research. For example, only one study has investigated networking intensity, and only a select number of predictors and outcome were studied. He also suggested that, any single study would be able to test all of the relationships in the model. As such, this study aimed to examine the relationship between self-esteem (individual differences variable), job-search intensity (job-search behaviour) and career decision-making (outcome predictor) among final year students.

1.1 Research framework

The research framework were based on Saks' [9] model (An Integrative Self-Regulatory Model of Job Search Predictors, Behaviours, and Outcomes) for the current study with limits the validation process to three profound constructs such as self-esteem, job-search intensity, and career decision-making.

Self-esteem is among the common personality variables included in job-search research and was originally included in Schwab et al.'s job-search model [8]. Related studies with this variable been done previously [5, 6, 7, 8 & 9], as such, this variable been identified in the current study.

Job-search intensity has two distinct measures, such as preparatory job search behaviour and active job search behaviour. Preparatory job-search behaviour involves gathering job-search information and identifying potential leads during the planning phase of job search. Active job search behaviour involves the actual job-search and choice process, such as sending out resumes and interviewing with prospective employers [14]. As such, with this additional information of job-search intensity, this activities proper for the final year students and was selected for this study. Others study related with this variable been done previously [30, 31, 32 & 33] and the current study as the continuation of the knowledge.

Career decision-making is predicted to have indirect effect on probability of employment, person-job fit and person-organization fit. In other words, job seekers who are more skilled at making job choice decisions are more likely to choose a job and organization that are good fits nicely and obtain quality employment. Job choice decision-making might also moderate the relationships between job-search behaviours and the outcomes [9]. In summary, Figure 1 shows the framework of current study which focuses on the relationship among self-esteem, job-search intensity and career decision-making of final year students. In this study, self-esteem is predicted influenced career decision-making and job search-intensity, whereas, job search-intensity is predicted influenced career decision-making. These constructs been chosen for current study based on local graduate issues mentioned previously, and to investigate the relationship in the model as suggested by Saks.

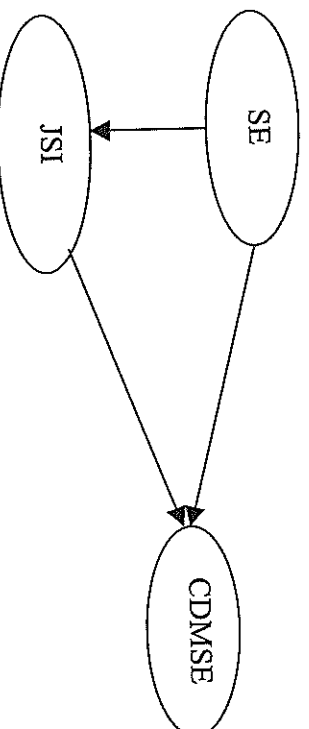


Figure 1: Research Framework adapted from Saks's [9] model.

1.2 Problem statement.

The problem addressed in this study is that students may be entering into the job market with little regards to magnitude of career decision-making. Career decision-making among students could be related with others variables that influenced students decision-making. Therefore the present study aimed to examine the relationship between self-esteem, job-search intensity and career decision-making among final year students. There were three specific hypotheses for this study which were:

- Hypothesis 1: Self-Esteem influences the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy.
- Hypothesis 2: Job-Search Intensity influences the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy.
- Hypothesis 3: Self-Esteem influences the Job-Search Intensity.

2 METHODS

2.1 Research Participants

The population for this study consisted of final year students from a public university in Malaysia during the 2009/2010 academic session. The sample sizes for this research were 728 final year students and adequate for Structural Equation Modeling (henceforth: SEM) techniques [40, 41]. A path model with 20 parameters should have a minimum sample size of 200 cases [40].

2.2 Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study were the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (henceforth: SE) [42]-used to measure students' global self-esteem, the Job Search Intensity Scale (henceforth: JSI) [14]-is a self-report scale assessing behaviours related to seeking employment, and the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale (henceforth: CDMSE) [43]-used to measures confidence in accomplishing career-related tasks. Cronbach Alpha for the instruments previously and currently studied as in Table 1.

Table 1: Cronbach Alpha for the instruments used

Instruments	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4	Current study
SE	0.86 [44]	0.85 [45]	0.60 [46]	0.64 [47]	0.69
JSI	0.71 [20]	0.78 [48]	0.89 [46]	0.86 [47]	0.86
CDMSE	0.94 [43]	0.96 [49]	0.89 [46]	0.92 [47]	0.93.

2.3 Research Procedure

The study was a survey-based type and participants were recruited using cluster sampling procedure. This procedure often involves a selection of clusters within clusters (example, faculty, class, section) which is also known as multistage sampling. On the selected date the questionnaires were distributed in the class room to the participants. The participants were given 30 minutes to complete the survey.

2.4 Data analysis

This research used the classical test to determine the reliability of the instrument. The study applied a two-stage Structural Equation Modeling, using the AMOS (version 16) model-fitting program to test the research hypotheses. The study first assessed the validity of the measurement models for self-esteem, job-search intensity and career decision-making self-efficacy. Next the researcher examined the good-fit of the full-fledged model.

3 RESULTS

Figure 2 presents the empirical results of hypothesized structural relationship model of self-esteem, job-search intensity, and career decision-making self-efficacy. The overall fit of the model was adequate with CFI = .951, TLI = .941 and RMSEA = .062. The statistics indicate that the parameters were free from offending estimates, ranging from .43 to .90. The CFI (.951) and TLI (.941) fit indicators exceeded the threshold of .90, indicating a very good fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA = .062) met the cut-off point requirement for a reasonable error of approximation. The normed chi-square of 3.635 for a good fit was also met [50]. The final fit index indicates that the test failed to reject the hypothesized model. Therefore, the hypothesis testing failed to reject the three statements (Self-Esteem influences the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy; Job-Search Intensity influences the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy; Self-Esteem influences the Job-Search Intensity).

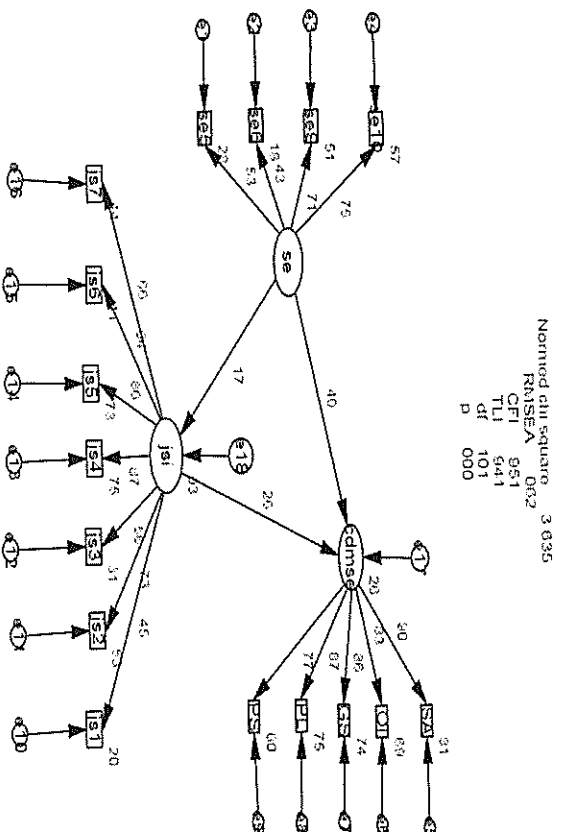


Figure 2: Results of structural relationships among Self-Esteem, Job-Search Intensity and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy.

The hypotheses were tested and the results of the hypothesis tests are concluded as follows:

- Hypothesis 1:** Self-Esteem influences the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy. The hypothesis was supported by the data.
- Hypothesis 2:** Job-Search Intensity influences the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy. The hypothesis was supported by the data.
- Hypothesis 3:** Self-Esteem influences the Job-Search Intensity. The hypothesis was supported by the data.

4 DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Discussion

4.1 Discussion

The findings of the present study have expanded the knowledge on relationship among self-esteem, job-search intensity, and career decision-making self-efficacy among final year students. The SE→CDMSE relationship in the full-fledged SEM model presented strong significant relationship (.40) while JSI →CDMSE shows a significant relationship at an absolute value of (.26) and the SE→JSI relationship was significant but rather weak (.17).

This finding supports the study done by Saks [9]. Based on the model, the self-esteem (individual differences variable) is significantly related to the job choice decision-making (other outcome predictors). In other words, students who have high self-esteem are more likely to have high confidence level or good career decision-making. Job seekers, who are more skilled at making job choice decisions are more likely to choose a job and organization that are good fits and more likely to obtain quality employment.

The results for relationship between job-search intensity and career decision-making self-efficacy among final year students showed that there was a significant relationship. This finding also affirms the study done by Saks [9], which is, the job-search intensity (job-search behaviour) was significantly related to the job choice decision-making (other outcome predictors). In other words, students who had high job-search intensity are more likely to have a high level of confidence or make good career decision-making.

The relationship between self-efficacy, goals and choice actions also was found. Suggestion been made that those who were confident of making career decisions were more likely to set career-related goals, and thus are more likely to make career plans and engage in career exploration [51]. Job-search behaviours are directly related to job-search and employment outcomes. Job seekers who are more skilled at making job choice decisions are more likely to choose a job and organization that are good fits and more likely to obtain quality employment [9].

The results of this study also showed that there was significant relationship between self-esteem and job-search intensity among final year students. This finding is similar to the findings gathered from other researchers [14, 15, 30 & 31] which is self-esteem (personality) was positively related to job search intensity (job-search behaviour).

4.2 Implication

Finding from this study can be divided into theoretical and practical implication. Based on theoretical implication, the results of this study support the idea of the relationships among self-esteem (individual differences variable), and job-search intensity (job-search behaviour) with career decision-making self-efficacy (outcome predictors) as mentioned in Saks' model [9]. Based on the model, self-esteem has the relationship with the job choice decision-making. In other words, students who have high self-esteem more likely to have good career decision-making and more likely to choose a job and organization that are fits nicely and obtain quality employment. Furthermore, students who have high job-search intensity more likely to have high confidence level or good career decision-making. As mentioned by Saks [9] in his study that not every relationship in the model has received the same amount of attention in previous research. For example, only one study has investigated networking intensity, and only a selected number of predictors and outcome were studied. The result of the current findings can be concluded as a new addition and confirmation to the model.

An implication for the practitioners such as guidance counsellor are to guide students develop attitude beliefs, students' psychological development and prepares them for the work world. This involves their development of personality, thinking, behaviour and emotion. To help students to understand themselves and others, the competencies based on self-knowledge (e.g. skills to maintain a positive self-concept), educational and occupational exploration (e.g. skills to locate, evaluate, and interpret information), and career planning (e.g. skills to make decisions) [52] can be referred. These skills can be taught to students through proper career development programmes guidance system in the university settings.

4.3 Suggestion

One of the most significant findings emerge was that the results are useful in helping the transition process of students from university to work. Such information could lead to an improvement in planning and policy-making for the development of a more effective and efficient counselling and career guidance system in the university settings. Career counsellors can assist through training workshops and provided with tools, manuals, annual labour supply/demand report. Alumni mentorship programmes can be created to link students with successful alumni working in a career field of similar interest. Online community portal can be included an interactive website for posing questions and answers to facilitate collaboration for career counsellors, students, new graduates and employers. Curricular contents in educational institutions should stress more on psychology and soft skills such as critical thinking and decision making and been taught within the formal setting of the university system.

The current study is conducted at one particular university, thus the results may not be generalised to other final year students from other universities. It is suggested that future study should do comparison among the universities and more diverse samples. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate others variable (e.g. conscientiousness, extraversion) of linking the predictors' variables with the outcome variables (e.g. Self-presentation skills) for future studies.

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study examined the relationship between self-esteem, job-search intensity and career decision-making self-efficacy among final year students. The findings showed that there were significant relationships between self-esteem and career decision-making self-efficacy, between self-esteem and job search intensity, and between job-search intensity and career decision-making self-efficacy.

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